

## **Socialization Agents of Generation X and Generation Y**

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**Abstract:** The values adopted by individuals today shape the values of a nation in the future. Socialization is a lifelong process, that is, it starts at birth and ends when a person dies. Even as we become adults, we often seek the influence of family members with greater experience or expertise. Primary modes of learning come from family, friends and several other agents that has encounter in daily life. When individual understand the level of influence of different socialization agents and adopted those habits and values therefore come under the process of consumer socialization. Children's influences increase with age. The socialization agents are the family, peers or the media; there are several possible socialization outcomes. The paper attempts to analyze the main socializing agent of Generation X and Generation Y. As the area of Generation X and Generation Y is quite large, companies need to differentiate their consumption related skills and influencing factor so that to tap Generations effectively. The prime motive of this study is to analyze the influencing agents of socialization for Generation X and Y.

**Keywords:** Buying decision, children's role, online presence, social media.

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Consumer behavior is the part and parcel of social sciences. Age is mainly a persistent factor in influencing consumer behavior. Both needs and wants vary massively by age. Young person needs and preferences in clothing, food and automobiles differ significantly from those of older adults. Children's influences increase with age. Even as we become adults, we often seek the influence of family members with greater experience or expertise. "The procedure by which people develop their values, motivation and habits is known as Socialization" (Ward 1974). It shows that the individual adopt values that influence their living, identification of right or wrong, their behavior and what is important in their consumption (Delbert Hawkins, 1990). The values adopted by individuals today shape the values of a nation in the future.

The concept of socialization got academic attention in early 1970s. Early contributions by the researchers outside the field of marketing inclined towards the understanding of human behavior. Scott Ward introduced consumer socialization to the area of consumer behavior. It was also argued that consumer socialization is viewed as a developmental process that changes through different stages as children mature into adult consumers (John 1999). In other words, although young people are getting more and more interested at branded products, they might value luxury goods differently among the different age groups. Moreover advertisement has tremendous influence on generation Y, despite of parental concern and repeated purchase. Marketers are becoming interested at this segment in expanding their market share, while the educator would like to understand more about this particular segment. Whether the socialization agents are the family, peers or the media, there are several possible socialization outcomes.

(McNeal, 1987; Moschis and Churchill, 1978; Szybillo and Sosanie, 1977) family is the primary determinant of socialization because it is the cord system of the child's life, as newborns are entirely relying on others. The family takes the task of teaching children cultural values and attitudes about themselves and others. Children adopt constantly from the environment that adults create. Children also become aware of a group of pupils at a very early age and allocate different values to each group accordingly.

The influence of the friend is high during teenage years, however it generally only affects short term period and thus shapes the behavior, preferences and attitude accordingly (Fan and Li, 2009). Peer group also consists of members who have similar interests and common age group (Mascarenhas and Higby, 1993). Such group motivates the teens to learn in a similar manner as the other group member performs. It shapes the behavior, preferences and attitude accordingly. In India person may have different kinds and groups of interests.

Price also plays an important role in consumption and scarcity of resources (Chan and McNeal, 2006).

Media is basically meant for, connecting people (Asur and Huberman, 2010). From the age of childhood children learn different things from electronic entertainment gadgets. While such media can provide education and entertainment, they can also damage children (Nyland, Raquel and Jason, 2007). Generation X and Generation Y seem to be very different when exposed to different media vehicles (Schiffman, L. G, Kanuk, L.L & Kumar, 2013). Social media is also a prominent socializing factor in Generation Y. Anderson and Rainie (2010) acknowledge that a drastic change of behavior in children due to exposure of media can result in aggressive attitudes and violent behavior. Thus it is an important contributor to the socialization process.

Education opens the career path for the children and develops essential skills, knowledge and attitude (French and Raven, 1959). Education basically leads to the society and generate various opportunities (Hayta 2008). The first chapter of learning starts from parents and family. Where children start observing the environment and behave in a manner that is acceptable to the society. Child starts responding to the environment and involve in consumer socialization.

Generation X (1964–1980) Generation group is the eye witnesses of computers, cell phones and the Internet. This Generation consumers pay more attention to the retailer and likely to have a continuing relation with their preferred retailer. Most of the time they are taking economical decisions to recognize the needs of household. Marketers are always framing strategies to influence Generation X because they tend to be their loyal customer as compared to Generation Y (Kaylene C. Williams & Robert A. 2005).

Generation Y (Millennial, Echo boomers, Generation Next, Internet Generation) is a term used to define the Generation of people with birth years from 1980 to 2000 (Erickson 2009 and Roongrensuke 2010). Generation Y are very complicated to understand by the marketer because their taste and preferences are changing very rapidly. They are very energetic and eager to adapt new technology. Technological whirlwinds continued to happen – high speed internet connectivity via broadband being a path breaking development. Laptops, notebooks and tablets increasingly replaced the unwieldy desktop systems. Cars in different price spectrums, of different makes and models catered to the aggressive Gen Y consumers. The immense popularity of social networks – facebook, twitter and LinkedIn to name a few, emerged as platforms of effective communication as also platforms for voicing popular opinions. Smart phones were no longer items of luxury and phones capable of multiple modes of communication became extremely popular.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW ON INFLUENCING AGENTS ON CONSUMER SOCIALIZATION

- **Ward (1974)** focuses on development of interest in consumer socialization and reviewed three key areas – content of learning, permanence of early learning and consumer socialization process. It put forwards that children's learning is influenced by stage in cognitive growth; that learning suggest itself directly related to consumption activities, or as a result of secondary learning, in the family and through mass media.
- **Churchill and Moschis (1979)** represent a model of consumer socialization developed and tested through hypothetical concept and empirical findings contributes to the influence of television, family and peers on adolescent consumer learning.
- **Eberhard (1983)** suggest that age class explain some differences in consumer disposition Family, peer, mass media and school are most relevant agent in consumer socialization.
- **Ekstrom and Foxman (1987)** conducted research on parent child influence in family decision and consumer socialization. The degree to which adolescents influence family decisions was found to be affected by family communication environment and product information. Mothers, fathers, and adolescents were found to be different in their opinion.
- **Michael et al. (2005)** shows the five major consumer socialization influence factors are – irrational social influence, importance of television, family influence, shopping importance and brand importance. The research performed through a survey administrated to 663 children with the help of factor analysis to examine young people's attitude towards interaction with these consumer socialization agents and marketplace factors including shopping and media usage behavior.
- **Sharma (2013)** indicates the children's influence is mainly for products like eatables. In certain products like CDs/DVDs, video games and hobby activities children's influence is higher than their parents on family purchase decision. The study conducted in **Chennai, India**. The of parent's perception of children influence through ANOVA analysis indicates that parent's income impacts the children's influence. The quadratic relation is examined between children influence and family income.
- **Chaudhary and Gupta (2014)**. The research conducted in **Delhi (NCR region)**. It shows the impact the various socialization agents on child's influence level in the family. Consumer socialization agents: television, internet and parents as a significant predictor of child's role as co-decision maker in the purchase decisions. The study had thrown light on the existing literature on Indian children (8–12 yr) as consumer. These socialization agents are expected to add clarity to the children's role in family decision making.

**III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The main objective is to study the main influencing agents on consumer socialization of Generation X and Generation Y. This research will be accomplished through qualitative and quantitative method based on the secondary information as well as primary information (surveys etc). The descriptive research design, as quantitative technique, is to check the research hypotheses and to predict the association between the agents through using personal interview face-to-face self-administered questionnaire relating to the consumer socialization of Generation X and Generation Y. Universe of the study comprise Generation X and Generation y. The target population is the people born in 1964 to 1980 belong to Generation X (Cekada, 2012) and 1980 to 2000 belongs to Generation Y (Erickson, 2009 and Roongrensuke, 2010). Convenience sampling technique will be used to select the sample from Himachal Pradesh. It is proposed to have a sample size of around 200. The Hypothesis testing would be done using Statistical methods. SPSS will be utilized for quantitative analysis of the data, in which appropriate statistical methods will be applied to the data to get the results which were analyzed in the past studies and use such as Factor analysis, T-test, correlation, ANOVA and Cronbach alpha for reliability test. The Analysis of the respondents will be done on the basis of the demographic attributes of the respondents as suggested by the various past studies.

**TABLE 1**  
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.675	.747	24

Reliability validity and uni-dimensionality: The Cronbach's Alpha scale is on the average correlation of 24 items within the test. The overall value of Cronbach's Alpha is .675 (Table 1) and Cronbach's Alpha Based on standardized items is .747 which shows that data is correct and reliable.

**TABLE 2**  
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.747
Approx. Chi-Square	369.384
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df
	21
	Sig.
	.000

The overall Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy, it falls in the acceptance range of above (0.5) with a value of 0.747. Examination of the values for each variable identifies that most of the variables also above 0.50. Therefore, most of the variables obtain and exceed the minimum acceptable MSA level and thus statistically significant and meet the fundamental requirement for factor analysis.

**TABLE-3**  
Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Age is main facor in socialisation.	1.000	.759
The Influencing factor are different for Gen X and Gen Y	1.000	.668
Your decision influenced by others	1.000	.638
Gen Y easily attaracted towards different marketing Tactics	1.000	.774
I discuss with my family before purchasing an item	1.000	.665
I discuss with my friends before purchasing an item	1.000	.784
I discuss with my social groups before purchasing an item	1.000	.757
My purchased decision is influenced by my family	1.000	.807
My purchased decision is influenced by my friends	1.000	.590
Promotional offers attract me the most	1.000	.575
Online advertising encourage me to make purchases	1.000	.743
Print media encourage me to make purchases	1.000	.641
Social Media encourage me to make purchases	1.000	.531
I spent time to taking reviews on social media before purchase an item	1.000	.755
Education impact on buying decision	1.000	.804
Education change the lifestyle of a person	1.000	.715
Education provide Knowledge and skill for buying	1.000	.715

Educated and uneducated persons having different buying habits	1.000	.700
Price is the main factor in purchasing	1.000	.576
Sometimes price influence buying decision	1.000	.580
You compare Prices of similar products	1.000	.726
You compare Prices Offline and Online	1.000	.544
Price determine Quality	1.000	.844

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The value for communalities >0.5 is sufficient for the explanation of constructs (Hair et al., 2009). The value for communalities is ranged from .531 to .844 (table 3). Here it is pertain to the value show factor analysis has extracted good quantity of variance in the items. Hence all the requirements of reliability, validity and unidimensionality are met.

**TABLE-4**  
Factor analysis results for main influencing socialization agents

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Education impact on buying decision	.957					
You compare Prices Offline and Online	.940					
You compare Prices of similar products	.940					
Education provide Knowledge and skill for buying	.781					
Your decision influenced by others	.708					
Educated and uneducated persons having different buying habits	.679					
Education change the lifestyle of a person	.672					
Sometimes price influence buying decision	.660					
My purchased decision is influenced by my friends		.898				
Price determine Quality		.889				
Print media encourage me to make purchases		.795				
I spent time to taking reviews on social media before purchase an item		.765				
My purchased decision is influenced by my family		.725				
Social Media encourage me to make purchases			.761			
Online advertising encourage me to make purchases			.677			
Price is the main factor in purchasing			.633			
Age is main facor in socialisation.			.625			
I discuss with my social groups before purchasing an item				.801		
I discuss with my family before purchasing an item				.783		

I discuss with my friends before purchasing an item				.722		
Gen Y easily attracted towards different marketing Tactics					.889	
Promotional offers attract me the most					.864	
Generation X and Generation Y having different buying behaviour						.838
The Influencing factor are different for Gen X and Gen Y						.834

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

There are six main factors classified using the factor analysis as shown in the Table 4. All the factors having loading more than 0.4 are considered and the loading ranged from .625 to .957. The first factor alone has explained 30.47% of the total variation in the factor analysis and might be labeled as control. Scale reliability alpha of present factor is .864.

The second factor loaded on five variables. The items included in the factor are: Family, friends, print media, social media and price. The factor loading ranges from .725 to .895.

The third factor is correlated with another four factors i.e- social media, online advertisement, price and age factor. This has explained 8.11% of the total variation in the factor analysis and indicates the importance of this factor. The factor loading ranges from .625 to .761.

The fourth factor is correlated with another three factors i.e- social group, family and friends. This has explained 7.1% of the total variation in the factor analysis. The factor loading ranges from .722 to .801.

The fifth factor is correlated with another two factors i.e- marketing tactics and promotional offers. This has explained 6.3 % of the total variation in the factor analysis and indicates the importance of this factor. The factor loading ranges from .864 to .889.

The sixth factor is correlated with another two factors i.e- Generation X and Y having different buying behavior and influencing factors.. This has explained 5.3% of the total variation in the factor analysis and indicates the importance of this factor. The factor loading ranges from .834 to .838.

**TABLE-5**

Age of respondents - Online advertising encourage me to make purchases ( Cross-tabulation )  
 Count

		Online advertising encourage me to make purchases					Total
		Strongly agree	agree	Neither disagree nor agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Age of respondents	Gen Y (16-24)	46	48	6	0	0	100
	Gen X (25-45)	13	50	32	2	3	100
Total		59	98	38	2	3	200

Table-5 shows that 94 respondents are of Generation Y while 63 respondents of Generation X is influenced through online advertisement and encourage them to make purchase decisions.

**TABLE-6**

Age of respondents \* I discuss with my friends before purchasing an item ( Cross-tabulation )  
 Count

		I discuss with my friends before purchasing an item			Total
		Strongly agree	agree	Neither disagree nor agree	
Age of respondents	Gen Y(16-24)	46	50	4	100
	Gen X(25-45)	15	60	25	100
Total		61	110	29	200

Table-6 shows that 96 respondents are of Generation Y while 75 respondents of Generation X discuss with friends before purchasing an item and encourage them to make purchase decision.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The result shows that 93% respondents of Generation Y and 63% of Generation X are influenced by online advertising. It shows that online advertisement makes more impact on Generation Y as compared to Generation X. Generation Y prefer to discuss with friends while purchasing any item. Finding shows that 96% respondents of Generation Y and 75% of Generation X discuss with their friends. If we compare both factors we find online advertisement has been an important contributor to the socialization process of Generation Y. With this inspiration, an effort has been made in the present study to identify the influencing factors of Generation X and Y which provides a clear picture of their changing consumption pattern and provide substantial suggestions which will eventually be valuable to marketer to converse and connecting well with the young and vibrant generation

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